

Statement of John Conyers, Jr.  
H.Res. 136 Gannon Resolution of Inquiry  
Judiciary Committee Markup  
March 16, 2005

We are here today because we have an Administration that is all too willing to flaunt the law, and a Congress that refuses to investigate even the most serious ethical transgressions. Whether it is torture at Abu Ghraib, sole source contracts with Haliburton, or the outing of a CIA operative, this Congress has been unwilling and unable to ask the hard questions or issue the difficult subpoenas.

We are here today because it simply defies credibility that a phony reporter, operating under an alias, who couldn't get privileges in the House or Senate press gallery, could receive scores of consecutive White House "day passes," without the intervention of someone very high up at the White House. Can anyone believe that while Pulitzer Prize winning journalists are being turned down for White House press passes, a fake journalist working for a Republican-controlled media front operation could receive virtually open-ended access to the White House press room in the absence of preferential treatment?

We are here today because the Administration has either rejected or ignored every bona fide request for information concerning Jeff Gannon. On February 9, Rep. Slaughter asked the White House how Gannon was able to obtain his special access – her request has been ignored. On February 10, Rep. Slaughter and I asked the same question of the Secret Service – we received a non-responsive response. On February 15, Rep. Slaughter and I filed a FOIA request with the Department of Homeland Security – again, no response. In the light of this stonewalling, we have no choice but to ask this Committee and this Congress to do its job and request these materials from the Administration.

We are here today because we are simply unwilling to tolerate the continued manufacture of news by our government. Taxpayers don't

want their money used to pay reporters to recycle Administration propaganda. Citizens can no longer tolerate paying reporters for their opinions while we can't fund our jobs and poverty programs. Americans don't want the White House press room to churn out releases that reporters like Jeff Gannon plagiarize and report as their own.

What we have today is a government by fiat, not a system of checks and balances. If we won't investigate this scandal, where will we draw the line? If we don't act now, when will we say enough is enough? I urge the Members to vote yes on this Resolution of Inquiry.